

Testimony for Public Hearing
Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs Committee
February 6, 2015 at 0800
Helena, Montana

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HB 147 – NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT

Good Day, Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committee. My name is Sue Warren, and I'm the Director of Nursing for Senior Services at Benefis Health System. I am providing written Testimony as I am unable to be in Helena today.

I am writing on behalf of Benefis Health System to request support of HB 147. The Nurse Licensure Compact has five major elements that I wish to present to you this morning:

1. The Health and Safety of the Public
2. Reporting of violations of Nurse Licensure resulting in the potential for Injury or Harm to Patients and/or Residents.
3. Promotion of Expanded Mobility of Nurses and the use of Technology to coordinate Nurse Licensure and Regulation among States.
4. Limits New Practice Modalities and Technology that make compliance difficult and complex; and,
5. Promotes Ease in Duplicative Licensure for Nurses Practicing in different states.

We have the responsibility to protect the "end-user" (the consumer) of our Healthcare in Assisting Living, Transitional Care, and Long Stay (Nursing Home) where patients and residents represent a vulnerable population. Nursing Shortages are paramount with the pending exodus of Nurses aged 55-65 in the current workforce to ensure successful and timely recruitment of nurses in a multi-state region. These shortages specifically exist in such specialties as Critical Care and Geriatrics – 2 of Benefis Health System's most difficult recruitment subspecialties.

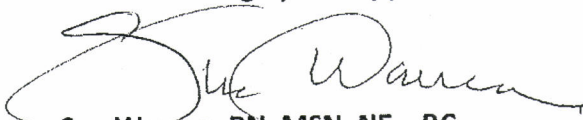
Nursing Practice is more specialized along the continuum of care from the Neonate and Pediatric patient to the Geriatric Patient. The skill need to care for these vulnerable patient populations is complex and requires validation of competency.

The Nursing Compact establishes a database to serve as a reference to all Providers/Employers when seeking nurses for hire. It would facilitate protected communication amongst employers and licensing agencies related to nurse investigation and adverse actions. The Compact would provide and promote patient/resident safety to assure that Nurses receive assistance to address competency and/or licensure action for appropriate treatment and follow-up.

The Compact is supportive of Nursing Practice Regulations and the Nurse Practice Act from State to State. The Licensee and in this case the Nurse is held accountable to meet all state practice laws in which the patient is located at the time care is rendered. This provides consistent opportunity for the Nurse to respond if required by State Law. This upholds ultimate patient safety and protects vulnerable populations.

I hold a License as a Registered Nurse in Montana as well as California. The privilege of a Compact means current, official authority from a remote state permitting the practice of nursing as either an RN or LPN in that state. This may mean revocation, suspension, probation or any other action that affects a nurse's authorization to practice. Disciplinary Review is reported immediately to any State in that Compact. The consumer and employer benefit as the Compact facilitates licensure and onboarding for new State Licensure requests – it helps recruitment and onboarding processes for RNs and LPNs.

In the end, the Nurse Licensure Compact creates a simpler process for nurses to practice in our beautiful State and improves the sharing of information on license infractions or criminal behavior. I urge your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Warren", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sue Warren, RN, MSN, NE – BC

Director of Nursing/Senior Services

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